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600 would appear as a Memoir of the Zoological Survey. The outbreak of the war with Japan stopped all publications. As the war dragged on and it appeared that Government Publications would be unduly delayed the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal accepted the manuscript for this series. I am deeply grateful to all concerned.

Of course thanks and acknowledgement are due to a host of Kols who graciously allowed themselves to be questioned and probed, measured and photographed. They have admitted us into their houses and into their councils. They have shared with us many of their joys, troubles and difficulties. They are a very human folk, and as one sat and talked with them, his heart went out to them, and we felt as one. They have been pleased and touched as we have attempted to understand their life and thought. What is here offered of that, however, is but a drop in the great ocean of Kol experience, and the author is conscious of all its limitations.

101 It is also necessary to make clear the terminology of this book,
114 for there has been a change in the meaning of terms. The word 'Kol' was once used in a generic sense to describe 'Munda-speaking' tribes and the term 'Kolarian' is still frequently found, especially in older textbooks of Ethnology. The word was originally used by Max Muller in a linguistic sense, but has now been generally abandoned in favour of 'Munda'. The Munda-speaking people, as distinguished from the Dravidian, delineate the large majority of the aboriginal people living in Chota Nagpur and in the highlands of Central India. The word 'Kol' as it will appear in these pages denotes a particular branch of the 'Munda-speaking' stock settled in Central India.

144 There are various theories held today as to the racial composition
174 of present-day India. The first inhabitants of India are thought to have been a Negroid people akin to the Negritos of today. This strain is at present largely submerged. In the course of time another race of people became dominant in the land. Dr. Guha has called them Proto-Australoids. They apparently displaced the Negritos and probably absorbed some of their blood. The Proto-Australoids of India show marked resemblances to the Veddas of Ceylon and to the aborigines of Australia. Practically the whole of the Central Indian and South Indian tribes, though speaking different tongues, belong to this group.* If anything, these people may be called the true autochtones of the Indian Peninsula. This same racial stratum persists today (though probably modified by contacts with other groups) in the Oraons, Santals, Mundas and Kharias of Bihar; in the Kols, Bhils, Gonds, Korkus, Baigas, etc., of Central India; in upper India among

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some of the lower castes such as the Chamars and Doms; and in South India in the Chenchus, Kurambas and Yeruvas.

The aim of attempting to present as accurately and completely as possible what the Kol is, does and thinks, has been constantly kept in mind. This is a study of a primitive tribe living in contact with Hindu influences. No attempt has been made to exclude any materials which Kols have in common with other village people, and to present those things peculiar to Kols alone. One would in that case not get an accurate picture of the Kol as he is, for much of what he considers his own is also the possession of many groups among whom he lives. Uniformity of belief and practice is nowhere characteristic of India, nor of this tribe, but the general picture as here presented has been found remarkably consistent through the areas we have toured. It is the author's hope that this book will encourage further studies in primitive groups, and also help to preserve the memory of these children of Sheori.

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Considering India as a whole the Census Reports give the following figures for the Kols :

Year	Total			
1881 ..	57,420			
1891 ..	143,551			
1901 ..	105,474			
1911 ..	148,245	(Including 23,819 'Animists')		
1921 ..	328,245	Do.	9,944	Do.
1931 ..	368,653	Do.	22,522	Do.[1]
1941 ..	202,757	..	..	..

ORIGIN OF THE KOLS : GENERAL : HISTORICAL DATA. In recent years there has been an active interest in the study of the origin of tribe and race in India. There are still vast fields to be explored, since much mystery surrounds the movements of races in India. This is just as true of the Munda group to which the Kols belong. Mr. Sarat Chandra Roy in his book *The Mundas and Their Country* published in 1912, was one of the first to make a serious study of the traditions of the tribes of Chota Nagpur concerning their origins. He does not find that their oral traditions throw much light upon the name or location of their original home.

One of the legends collected by Roy suggests the place of origin as *Sasa Sandi Bir*—'the vast desolate forest.' This vague terminology makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify any specific locality. It may refer in general to the Highlands of Central India, or even to the dense jungle that is said to have covered parts of the Gangetic Valley. Roy also points out that the Cosmogonic legend of the Munda tribe names a place called *Ajabgarh*—a place first raised out of the primeval ocean, where Sing Bonga, the Supreme deity of the Munda group in Chota Nagpur, created the first parents of the Munda tribe. Roy holds that this idea was probably borrowed from the Hindus and then mixed up with some of the current Munda legends[2]. The Kols of Central India seem to know nothing, or have heard nothing, about Sing Bonga.

Sir William Crooke, in his article on the Kol tribe, gives us the following legendary information[3]. A certain King, Yayati, fifth King of the Lunar race, divided his empire among his five sons. According to the Harivansa, the children of Yayati's son Turuvasu settled in the south. The tenth generation (from, and including

1 *Ibid.*, 1:2, pp. 522, 523.
2 Roy, Sarat Chandra, *The Mundas and Their Country*, p. 12.
3 Crooke, W., *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. III, pp. 296, 297.

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Turuvasu), consisted of four brothers: Pandya, Korala, Chola and Kola. These divided the kingdom amongst themselves and the descendants of the last son, Kola, became the ancestors of the present Kols.

There is another legend recorded by Colonel Tickell[1] which tells of two self-existent primeval deities called Ote Boram and Sing Bonga. These deities created a boy and a girl and put them together in a cave expecting them to people the earth. However they were found to be too innocent to give hope of progeny and were therefore instructed by these deities in the art of making rice beer which inflames the passions. This was done, and in the course of time they had twelve sons and twelve daughters. These were divided into pairs in order to form the races to people the world. The choice was made on the basis of the kind of food they chose to eat. Sing Bonga set various kinds of food before them, with results which may be summarized thus:

1st pair	chose	bullock flesh	and became Kols.
2nd "	"	buffalo	" Bhumiyas.
3rd "	"	vegetables only	" Brahmins.
4th "	"	Do.	" Chhatris.
5th & 6th	"	goat	" Sudras.
7th & 8th	"	fish	" Sudras.
9th	"	shell fish	" Bhuiyas.
10th & 11th	"	pork	" Santhals.
12th		nothing	" Ghasis.

As the last pair had nothing the first pair was sorry for them and gave them some of their food and ever since they have been dependent on the Kols for food.

Crooke also records how the Kols of Mirzapur relate that they are emigrants from a place called Kiutali, in the territory of the then Bardi *Raja* in Rewa State. They name one Nanhu as their ancestor and had a tribal temple at Pipri near Chunar on the East Indian Railway, in which they installed Birmha *devi*. "Like many of the kindred tribes, they have legends of a kingdom in the Gangetic valley, whence they were expelled by the Savaras and returned to the hill country of the south."[2]

Russell and Hiralal in *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* have nothing to add to Crooke's account in connection with traditions of origin. Apparently they did not put much emphasis on this subject.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 206.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 206.

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INFERENTIAL: HINDU SCRIPTURES. A study of the sacred books of the Hindus indicates that in the Rigveda two distinct classes of people are recognized from the earliest times. There seems to be constant antagonism between the fair-skinned Aryans (R. V. I:100:18) or Devas on the one hand, and the black-skinned groups (I:100:1) which were termed *dasyus* and *dasas*.[1]

A survey of later Hindu Scriptures such as the Puranas, Upanishads, the Mahabharata and Ramayana seems to indicate that Hindu Scriptures give no really satisfactory account of the origin of the Munda people, nor therefore of the Kols which we are studying. It is not unlikely that in the references to the Nishadas, Chandalas, Paulkasas and the like, we may find truer examples of the savage races who from ancient time occupied upper India. It can be argued that these ancient writings really do not say anything that is of Munda or Kol significance, yet nevertheless they do show the presence of an aboriginal group which very likely included the Munda peoples, and that this group was in possession of the land and was not easily displaced. They also show that the aborigines were different physically, socially and linguistically; that there were religious differences and that they were looked down upon and despised. But whether the tribes which the Aryans had to overcome were Mundas or Dravidians, or both, is very difficult to say. One of the writers in *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*[2] (Article on *Horo*) believes that it may be universally admitted that the first contact of the invaders with the Dravidians proper did not take place before the expeditions described in the Ramayana, and that in Vedic times and earlier, north India was inhabited by the Munda Tribes which, however, never seem to have reached the shores of the seas.

The discoveries in the excavations of Harappa and Mohenjodaro have led to a radical revision of earlier pictures of the condition of northern India before the coming of the Aryans. Further search of the Sind valley in northwestern India has revealed scores of settlements of the Indus valley civilization and some probably even preceding it known as the 'Amri' culture.[3] The whole area, apparently, was one of thriving activity long before the Aryans moved southwards.

The earlier interpretations of the pre-history of India were based largely on the Rigvedic descriptions and it was taken for granted that they recorded actual conditions. From these evidences the assertion was made that the peoples of India—the pre-Aryans—were on a much

1 See Appendix vi. Glossary of Vernacular Terms.
2 Hoffman, J., and Van Emelen, A., *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*,
3 Mackay, Ernest, *The Indus Civilization*, p. 3, 4.

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lower level of civilization than the Aryans and were so degraded as to be called *dasas*. The mention of the *dasas* being wealthy in cattle and goods, as being good fighters and living in forts was discounted as an exaggeration. Their inferiority was tacitly taken for granted and Marshall comments : "Never for a moment was it imagined that five thousand years ago, before even the Aryans were heard of, the Punjab and Sind, if not other parts of India as well, were enjoying an advanced and singularly uniform civilization of their own, closely akin, but in some respects even superior to that of contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt."[1] Marshall goes on to sketch the main outlines of their culture and shows that it was "not an incipient civilization, but one already age-old and stereotyped on Indian soil, with many millennia of human endeavour behind it."[2]

Whether the Rigvedic descriptions represent the clash of the "Aryans" and the Indus valley peoples is an open question and waits for further light. Whomsoever they met, as they moved over the plains of northern India, gave them much opposition and it took a long time to overcome and definitely subjugate them. And whether this relatively advanced type of culture succumbed so low before the "Aryans," that its peoples became their servants and slaves is also problematical. Possibly the groups which have become the lower castes in northern India and Bengal belong to an ethnological stream other than that represented by the Mohenjo-daro peoples, and were really a primitive jungle people occupying the highlands of Central India and finding support in the more menial tasks which accompany a higher culture. Those that preferred the jungle ways have as a whole maintained their identity in their forest isolation. More than once they had to retreat before the encroaching "Aryans," and by a series of migrations, now dimly enshrined in their traditions, reached the central parts of India where they now reside.

PARTICULAR : BELIEFS OF THE KOLS IN CENTRAL INDIA. Kols questioned by us in our investigations do not seem to have many definite myths of the place or time of their origin. Those who live in Jubbulpore district almost without exception say that Rewa is their native land, their *desh*, the place of their origin. In Rewa itself two informants, in giving us stories of the origin of the Kols, said that the place of origin was Sheori Narayan, a town in the eastern part of Central Provinces, near the city of Raipur. Another town to the east mentioned by a Rewa Kol is called Pharenda, which, he said, was five or

1 Marshall, John, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I, p. v.
2 *Ibid.*, p. v.

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six *kos* east of Rewa city. One of the Kol sub-divisions is called the Binj *kurbi*, and it seems to be generally considered the highest of all their divisions. This group does not seem to exist now-a-days, or at least they do not know where its members may be found, but the implication is that this is the highest group and so perhaps the first group, and that it had its origin in the Binj mountains, the modern Vindhya range of Central India. These mountains lie, generally speaking, to the west of the centre of the Kol population of the present time. The inference might be drawn from these facts that they are from the country to the west. Other informants said that the Kols came into Rewa from the north. It would thus appear that their traditions are very uncertain on this point. Other of their traditions look back to Chitrakot, in the Banda district, which is to the north-west of the present population centre.

A story is told by Kols that the *devatas* or gods were very happy at the birth of Rama and that they desired to celebrate it properly. What was the best form in which to enter the world, was the question they had to decide. They considered that part of the praise should be by song and drum—the *dholak*—so they conceived the idea that the best they could do would be to take the form of Kols. This they did and built a great temple at Chitrakot, sang songs and played the *dholak* there in honour of Rama. When asked further just why the *devatas* took the form of Kols the answer was a bit fuller than intimated at first. They said that the Kols were both the best labourers and the best singers in the world. No one could build the temple so efficiently and so speedily as they and also none like them could praise so acceptably. Therefore the gods came in the guise of Kols.

Quite consistently the Kols to whom we talked trace their origin back to a certain Sheori or Savari or Shivari, calling her 'The Mother of all Kols.' The name may possibly go back to the Savaras of the *Mahabharata*, although it seems more likely that it is based on a certain Ramayana story. The stories vary considerably but their main purport is as follows: There once lived a certain woman named Sheori. She is called by some Kolni (hence Kols) and by others Bhilni.[1] The latter term links the Kols and the Bhils together: this is quite a common, and significant occurrence in their stories. She was a faithful devotee of Bhagwan. Sometimes those who relate the stories call him Siva and at other times Krishna. She followed her lord always and it was her greatest desire to serve him in any way she could,

1 '*Ni*' is the feminine sign: thus 'Kolni' means a Kol woman. In the same manner 'Bhilni' means a Bhil woman.

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Sheori was foolish and has brought the Kols into great economic difficulties with her choice of children. However, when asked who the father of these children was they looked rather startled and could give no answer. They were but the gift of Bhagawan. The first five brothers so born eventually scattered and founded various subdivisions: Binj, Thakuriya and Kathautiya being mentioned. The first brother went to the Binj mountains and thus the Binj *kurhi* was formed. Bhagawan's boon was granted to Sheori in the jungles near the modern Sheori-Narayana, not far from Raipur, and today there is a great temple there to which all castes may go and worship.

Such traditions as the above are significant as folklore, but indicate that the Kol accounts cannot be very old and certainly not pre-historic, nor can they give us much real information concerning the place of their origin nor their migrations. They are too much diluted with Hindu mythologies and were undoubtedly drawn from Ramayana stories and coloured by their own imagination. They do indicate, however, a definite movement of thought. Even though the Kols possessing a primitive animistic outlook have come into contact with Hinduism and have accepted certain Hindu deities, nevertheless the acculturation has not been complete: the tribal god (Sheori, a goddess in this case), is even yet given preference over Hindu gods, and this in spite of possibly some 3,000 years of contact.

Up till now but little information has been available about this interesting group, and there is still much that should be done. This study is mainly of the Kols who are in contact with Hinduism, and no attempt is made to isolate the primitive Kol. Further detailed and systematic fieldwork will undoubtedly supplement and may even correct some of the statements found here, and it is not claimed that this should be taken as the last word on the Kols of Central India.

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back to his home. When the Kol received the news he denied that the son was his and claimed that the Thakur was the real father. In the end the Thakur kept the child and when he grew up the boy was married, and his descendants make up the Thakuriya Kols.

Another story is that there were once two sisters Shivari and Sudama. Shivari was the elder. Sudama entered the house of a Thakur and conceived a child by him and her descendants are called the Thakuriyas. Shivari's children became the Rautiyas.

There is also a much longer story current which involves a battle with the Ahirs.[1] Once there lived at Pipari, south of the Ganges river near the river Belam, an old Kol named Makhara Dudjh. He had a very beautiful wife named Chandwa. They had five daughters, four of whom were married without difficulty. Many Ahirs lived some distance from the Kols in a village called Gaura, and the two groups were on good terms and often ate together. This gave the opportunity to an Ahir named Loharik to elope with Chandwa. The Kols were much angered at this breach of hospitality and a group of three hundred and sixty of them armed with guns, swords and spears set out after the Ahirs and defeated them, but could not locate Chandwa. In the course of time Loharik Ahir and Chandwa Kol had a son called Bhorik. After a few years Loharik remarked to his brother Samar that the Kols were getting too powerful and should be destroyed, and that they had better play a trick and thus eliminate them. A marriage was arranged between Bhorik and an Ahir girl and the Kols were invited. The Ahirs had five or six great jars of liquor ready for the wedding feast. The three hundred and sixty Kols came with all their arms to the village of Gaura. Loharik Ahir stood before Makhara Dudjh with folded hands and respectfully asked him to have all the implements of warfare put into a room and locked so that at the time of drinking no incidents might occur. The Kols foolishly trusted him and their weapons were locked away. The Ahirs had been warned not to take a second drink, but rather to feign drunkenness after the first drink. Before long the Kols were too drunk to fight and the Ahirs quickly killed all of them.

Now Makhara Dudjh had a younger brother named Devasi who was blind and hence had to live by begging. His sister cared for him

1 In the *Census of India*, 1931 1:2 p. 9 64, it is related that "The Abhiras, from whom the modern Ahirs are said to have descended were a widespread people....The Abhiras were in the North-west Frontier Province before the Christian era. In the third century A.D. they were in lower Sind and North Gujarat and next they appear to have passed down the Tapti valley into Khandesh." Possibly these Kol stories go back to 250 A.D. and to the struggles with the Abhiras for the possession of the land. Later material is mixed up, as the Thakuriyas are also brought into the story.

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